BRA #3 PT

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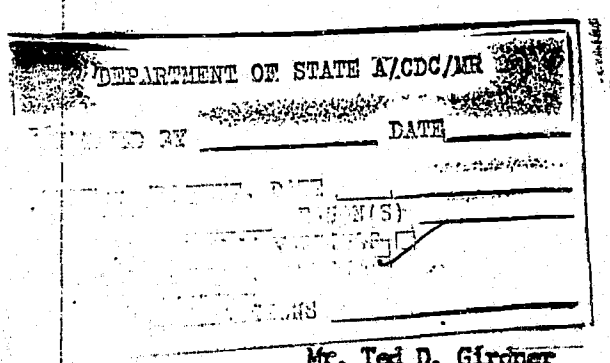

Georgetown, Guyana

January 18, 1978

Mr. Ted D. Girdner
Director
Division of International Operations
Social Security Administration
P. O. Box 1756
Baltimore, Maryland 21203

Dear Ted:

I thought that my assignment to Guyana would lessen my activities with SSA, especially after two such active posts as Adana and Zagreb. However, I seem to find myself right in the middle of a problem involving SSA recipients.

I travelled to the People's Temple Mission Village in Guyana's Northwest District on January 11, 1978. I had personal private contact individually and collectively with all the beneficiaries shown on the enclosed form. All are presently residing in the Mission Village and all claimed to receive their social security checks personally. They all stated that they have not signed any written agreement or power of attorney assigning or transferring their monthly social security benefits to the People's Temple organization. They all indicated that they either cash their checks personally or through the assistance of a member of the organization. They denied that they had to turn over the proceeds of their check to the Temple but rather could donate whatever they wanted. None are employed by the People's Temple.

I believe their answers were essentially genuine although probably all social security recipients are influenced to turn over their monthly benefits after their checks are cashed. However, all the pensioners that I saw appear to be adequately housed, fed, and in relatively good health. There are medical facilities at the

Village and community activities for them to participate in. Several mentioned to me that they feel safe at the Village and particularly enjoy the warm climate and the opportunity to fish, garden and pursue other leisure but useful activities.

In short, I am convinced that the People's Temple has not actually forced social security annuitants to sign away their benefits. I can also confirm that is preferable to send the checks through the Mission Village address rather than entrust them to the local unsafe and chaotic mail service.

It may interest you to know that we currently have 78 social security recipients listed at the Embassy who are residing at the Mission Village. I have personally delivered this month's checks to the Village and gave them to a number of the beneficiaries.

I hope the above information clarifies this situation for you. If you have any questions or need any additional information let me know.

I hope you had a very pleasant holiday. Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Mc Coy
American Consul

c.c. Ambassador
ARA/CAR/GY - Tumminia
SCS/EA - Powers

Enclosure:
List of social security recipients residing at the Mission Village.
Not enclosed. KC 2-1-78

N. B.
One of the beneficiaries listed a Mr. Robert Johnson SSN 437-09-0486, has been in Guyana since approximately last August and has not received any of his benefit checks since his arrival. I would appreciate your checking into the reason for the delay.